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THE MUSICAL TIMES, And Singing Class Circular.

APRIL 15th, 1854.

Music in this Number.

THE BATTLE OF THE BALTIC,
Composed by C. A. MACRONE.

MOZART'S MASSES.


No. XII.

Contributed by E. HOLMES.

THE Gloria divided into four movements, when considered in reference to the age in which it was produced, and to the claims of priority of discovery in the invention of choral and instrumental effects, possesses higher interest than the musician, at a hasty glance, might be inclined to suppose. Among these effects we must enumerate the *crescendo* of the great orchestra, by studied degrees bringing voices and instruments to a climax of *fortissimo*—an effect peculiarly modern, and which has since been found equally good or even better reversed;—the coda, or tail-piece of a few bars, unconnected with what has gone before, and added solely with a view to a brilliant conclusion;—the unison redoubled over three octaves, in voices and instruments; and the same unison exemplified in syncopated passages of melody, as we still hear them in the finale of the modern Italian opera. Such are the salient points of novelty which communicate historical importance to the Gloria of the Twelfth Mass. Effective and agreeable as the music still is, it must in its day have opened a marvellous prospect of the future glories of the orchestra; and yet the plan of the composition which proposes to produce a grand effect by the most simple means, and therefore does not employ the composer's usual resources of harmony and modulation, shows Mozart accomplishing a musical design, which is in complete symmetry and consistency with itself, with as much facility and success in a new style as if he had used in it only his passages of predilection and favored regard.

Reserved for a grand effect, and in contrast with the soft melodious Kyrie, we have the Gloria in C, Allegro moderato, $\frac{4}{4}$, the orchestra reinforced by horns, trumpets, and drums. The successive notes of the common chord extending in unison from the key-note to the tenth, form a subject of great simplicity; but yet, delivered by a good choir, they sound so grand and jubilant, that, when years ago, under the Kemble management, the gorgeous cathedral coronation scene of Charles X., at Paris, was represented at Covent-garden Theatre, this music to accompany it was adopted by common consent of both managers

and musicians, and nothing fitter for the occasion could be wished. Mozart did not wish miscellaneous hearers to hesitate in their impressions of this part of his work, but that it should strike at once: hence its fitness for dramatic purposes. It has been remarked that the trumpets are silent in the opening bars, though the introduction intones the natural notes of their scale. By this reservation, however, the passage is saved from a certain vulgarity which would have ensued, had too much been done; and the effect in the first burst of choral harmony—"In excelsis Deo gloria"—is enhanced. What follows is a passage of mere effect, consisting almost entirely of repetition: it is prolonged for eighteen bars; and then,

after the powerful unison,  Et in ter-ra

Mozart introduces, for better hearers, this uncommonly elegant and characteristic phrase, in which the real author will be instantly recognized:—



Violini
all 8va.
Soprano.
Alto.
Tenor.
Bass.

p

Pax, Pax,

Pax ho - mi - ni - bus

Not only do the short notes of the voices accompanying *piano* produce a beautiful and unusual effect, but they afford an opening for the fine holding notes of the wind instruments. It is in creating such opportunities that the master shows his skill, and in filling them up the most passionate impulses of his pen—his work is to him manifest enjoyment.

The regular and skilfully prepared *crescendo* which is afterwards introduced twice, must have certainly been unusual in its day; not any other of Mozart's Masses, and no Opera of the same date, with which we are acquainted, exhibiting that great effect of the modern orchestra in a point of so much stress and importance. If church music could have dispensed with the *crescendo*—this effect and its opposite, the *decrescendo*, have certainly been the life and soul of the musical drama, and of all symphony, orchestral, and quartet music. They have given expression to melody, and a new charm to harmonic combinations;

the second entrance of the chorus, at "suscipe deprecationem," the harmonies become so impassioned and dramatic, that the true composer cannot be longer concealed. The symphony at the close, in C minor, is a piece of Mozart's scoring, which is pleasant to read and imagine, but better to hear :—

Ob. 1.
Vio. 1mo
Ob. 2,
Vio. 2.
Viole
Fagotti.
Bassi.

At the third and last entrance of the chorus the composer curtails what had been before heard, and substitutes a coda of ten bars on the dominant harmony of F minor, but avoids a cadence in that key by taking a diminished 7th on B natural. The Miserere, which is sung *tutti piano*, subsides into a splendid effect of *pianissimo*. Nothing can be more religious, solemn, and affecting than the conclusion, breathed out by an accomplished choir—

Soprano.
Alto.
Tenor.
Bass.

mise - re - re no - - - bis,
p *pp*
mi - se - re - re *pp* no - - - bis,

In the next movement, Quoniam, in G $\frac{3}{4}$, the music can scarcely be said to begin with the introductory symphony; the chords struck on the violins merely arouse attention by announcing that something is about to take place. The voice parts, consisting of solo, quartet, and chorus, are florid, pretty, and elegant; and relieve, by the contrast of a light and cheerful style, the solemnity of the "Qui tollis." Were it not for the melodious and elegant effect of the quartet of voices and the delicacy of the instrumentation, the character of this music would be common; the bass and tenor solos, which open the two divisions of the movement, have this tendency; but the popular in style is still combined with matter for the refined hearer. The history of melody and of instrumental effect might be well illustrated by

a composition so strongly marked by its age as this. We are carried back to the time of Artaxerxes and Dr. Arne, in a symphony ending with this formula of notes—the old and approved method of coming to a cadence :—

Vio. 1.

It is seldom that Mozart has such things to answer for. Then, as if some friendly burgomeister and patron of his was to be present at the performance of the Mass, Mozart provides for him, to remind him of the musical charms of his youth, a passage of Rosalia :—

Tu solus sanc - - tus
Soprano.
Alto.
Tenor.
Bass.
Tu so - lus

This phrase is repeated three times, ending with a cadence a note higher till it reaches E minor. The composer then returns to G, by descending gradations, in a manner purely his own, so beautiful and expressive as to form an instructive contrast to a progression which carries in it the seeds of old age and decay :

Quo - ni - am tu so - lus, tu
Soprano.
Alto.
Tenor.
so - - - lus Al -
so - lus sanc - - tus
- - tis - si - mus tu so -

This passage was certainly liked by its composer : we may see it in his accompaniment for the first

violins, ; an octave feature peculiar to his scores, when in the most luxurious vein of composition.

The conclusion for solo voices is also striking—

Je - su Chris - te,

Cherubini, in the "Et incarnatus" of his Mass in F, and Beethoven, in the slow movement of his Symphony in C minor, have improved on hints here given for the rise and fall of simple melody.

(To be continued.)